

Director's Report

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**HIGHER
EDUCATION**
COORDINATING BOARD

Fall proves a busy season for HECB programs, staff

By Marc Gaspard

With the annual changing of the leaves comes the annual flurry of activity at the state's colleges and universities.

And with that activity comes a variety of new items for the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Getting the message out

One way to help spread the word about the state's need to invest in higher education now is to spend time with newspaper editorial writers.

Board Chair **Bob Craves**, Communications Director **Barbara Dunn** and I have been able to meet with the editorial staffs of the *Seattle Times*, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and the *Everett Herald* to explain the 2003-05 budget recommendations just adopted.

In these meetings, we outline the current and future needs of higher education and why the \$1.1 billion additional investment is critical to the state's success.

We have had good, indepth discussions about the issues, and continue to fight for the institutions' needs for adequate funding.

Still to come: **Gay Selby** and I will meet with the *Longview Daily News* later this week, and **Roberta Greene** and I will meet with the *Spokesman-Review* in Spokane.

Board Member **Herb Simon** authored an editorial column that got good coverage in the *Tacoma News Tribune* last month, and the Board continues to get mention in articles about the needs for higher education.

WICHE update

I recently attended a meeting of

the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) in which we heard accounts from each state experiencing similar budget woes. Washington is not alone in its fiscal dilemmas.

But on a positive note, Washington **Sen. Don Carlson** was named vice chair. We can expect Sen. Carlson to assume the WICHE chairmanship next year.

Also new to WICHE as a commissioner is **Debora Merle**, policy adviser to **Gov. Gary Locke** on higher education issues. Debora replaces **Sen. Ken Jacobsen**, who resigned from WICHE. Commissioners are appointed by the governors of their respective states.

WICHE was created in 1953 to facilitate resource sharing among the higher education systems of the West.

New college saving plan work under way

The Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Committee last week began contract negotiations with ICMA Retirement Corp. of Washington, D.C. to establish a college savings plan.

The new 529 college savings option will be offered in the fall of 2003. The program, called Savings for Education Tomorrow (SET) will

enjoy all elements of a college 529 savings plan, including tax-free growth when used to pay for college expenses.

The SET program will complement the GET prepaid tuition program by offering families another way to save for college that allows them to save enough to cover all eligible college expenses.

(see SET next page)



GET stats as of Nov. 30, 2002:

25,108 total active accounts
(1,048 new enrollments)

5.264 million units sold

\$168 million in payments received

\$234.5 million total value

Reports, reports

HECB staff have been busy putting the finishing touches on a variety of reports due before the end of the year.

Kathy Raudenbush has been working on the Cost Study Report, which the HECB produces every four years. She also has been devoting much time and effort to the annual Tuition and Fee Report, which will be used by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in its work on tuition around the country. She also recently completed the faculty and staff salaries report.

Other reports include work by **Nina Oman** (gender equity and accountability), **Patty Mosqueda** (helping on the cost study and tuition and fee reports, as well as reciprocity) and **Linda LaMar** and **Evelyn Hawkins** (Washington Promise Scholarship evaluation).

HECB outlines budget, issues for UW Bothell advisors

HECB Deputy Director **Ruta Fanning** and Director of Governmental Relations and Policy **Bruce Botka** made a presentation at the University of Washington Bothell Advisory Board meeting in November.

They reviewed the Board's budget recommendations and the outlook for the 2003 legislative session.

In addition to the Board's \$1.1



billion recommendation enhancement, they discussed the preliminary results of the November general election.

They also previewed the higher education policy issues likely to get legislative consideration.

Among the 40 guests attending were community leaders, university administrators, faculty and student leaders and the president of Cascadia Community College.

HECB charitable giving up by 3%

This year, the HECB raised more than \$8,850 for the Combined Fund Drive, an annual event for all state government employees.

It is a workplace-giving campaign that has proven beneficial to many charities statewide over the past 15 years.

The theme of this year's agency event was the HECB County Fair. Agency staff participated by bringing in their garden flowers and vegetables, pies, homemade jams and other home-cooked specialties.

All Fair entries were judged, and ribbons were awarded.

Despite a year in which average statewide charitable giving in the Combined Fund Drive dwindled, the HECB saw an 11 percent increase in participation--nearly 59 staff joined in--and an increase in giving of almost 3 percent.

SET program offers another way to save

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The SET program will not have a guarantee, but will offer families more flexibility in investment options.

The new program will offer a variety of options including:

- ♦ Age-Based Funds (for those who want a managed investment that meets a time horizon)

- ♦ Model Portfolio Funds (for those who want a fixed allocation mixed to match risk tolerance)
- ♦ Choice Funds (for those who want a hands-on investment option)

Contract negotiations with ICMA Retirement Corp. and final program design are now in progress.

HECB represented in federal Veterans Affairs group

Michael Ball, associate director for the State Approving Agency and Degree Authorization, is participating this week in a Joint Peer Review Group (JPRG) at the Department of Veterans Affairs central office in Washington, D.C.

State Approving Agencies (SAA) are under contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs to approve programs of education and training for the those eligible to receive benefits under the GI Bill.

The HECB is responsible for program approvals at academic

institutions, flight schools and apprenticeship programs.

The JPRG is made up of two representatives from the National Association of State Approving Agencies and two chief education liaison officers from the DVA.

The group will review performance evaluations to ensure each SAA meets standards as required by federal regulations.

The JPRG also mediates disputes in performance ratings between agencies and local education liaison representatives.

Staffing changes for Promise Scholarship, GET and EOG programs

Belated congratulations go out to **Madelyn Jacques** who successfully competed for, and was appointed to, the position of program manager for the Promise Scholarship Program in November.

Madelyn joined the Board in 2000 as the front desk receptionist. After eight months in that position, she applied for and was appointed to the program coordinator position with the Future Teachers Program.

Work Study students

Julie Wiseman began her work with the Guaranteed Education Tuition staff on Nov. 20. Julie is a student currently enrolled at Centralia College, working towards her degree in office management. Prior to her work at the Board, she worked as a substitute educational assistant in the Chehalis and Onalaska school districts.

Amber Sommer began her work

with the Educational Opportunity Grant Program on Nov. 22. She is currently enrolled at Saint Martin's College, working toward a degree in elementary education. Amber expects to graduate in May 2004.

In the Works

The State Work Study Program is adding another program coordinator to its staff. Recruitment announcements will begin to go out next week.